



## CITY OF WATERTOWN, NEW YORK

### CITY PLANNING BOARD

ROOM 302, WATERTOWN CITY HALL  
245 WASHINGTON STREET  
WATERTOWN, NEW YORK 13601-3380  
(315) 785-7730

MEETING: January 14, 2014

**PRESENT:**

Sara Freda, Chair  
Larry Coburn  
Lori Gervera  
Neil Katzman

**ALSO:**

Kenneth A. Mix, Planning and Community  
Development Coordinator  
Michael Lumbis, Planner  
Andrew Nichols, Planner  
Justin Wood, Civil Engineer II

**ABSENT:**

Michele Capone  
William Davis  
Lin Fields

The January 14, 2014 Planning Board Meeting was called to order at 3:12 PM by Planning Board Chair Sara Freda. Mrs. Freda then called for a reading of the Minutes from the November 5, 2013 Planning Board Meeting. Mr. Coburn made a motion to waive the reading of the Minutes and accept them as written. The motion was seconded by Mr. Katzman, and all voted in favor.

### **ZONE CHANGE – VARIOUS TO COMMERCIAL**

#### **VL-10 WASHINGTON ST – PARCEL 14-26-102.100**

The Planning Board then considered a request submitted by Mark Purcell of Purcell Construction to change VL-10 Washington Street, parcel 14-26-102.100, from a mix of Commercial, Neighborhood Business, and Residence C to fully Commercial.

Rick Gefell was present for Purcell Construction and approached the Board to explain the request, which will allow the development of a restaurant on the site. His company also owns a large contiguous piece of land in the Town of Watertown that would be developed, but requires no zone change from the town.

Mrs. Freda asked what the zoning for the portion in the town is.

Mr. Gefell said that it is commercial.

Mr. Katzman asked if the neighbors had been contacted, and if they had any objections.

Mr. Gefell said that he hadn't talked to any of them; the surrounding area is mostly apartments and commercial buildings.

Mr. Katzman moved to recommend that the City Council approve the request submitted by Mark Purcell of Purcell Construction to change VL-10 Washington Street, parcel 14-26-102.100, from a mix of Commercial, Neighborhood Business, and Residence C to fully Commercial.

Mrs. Gervera seconded, all voted in favor.

**ZONE CHANGE – RES A TO LIGHT INDUSTRIAL  
VL-R BRADELY ST AND 1108 LEWIS ST – 1-27-103, 1-27-104**

The Board then considered a request by Mark Purcell of Purcell Construction to change VL-R Bradley Street and 1108 Lewis Street, parcels 1-27-103 and 1-27-104, from Residence A to Light Industrial.

Rick Gefell of Purcell Construction explained that his company planned to build an industrial park just outside the city, and that this sliver of land within the city needed to be changed to allow a rail spur to cross into the industrial park.

Mr. Katzman asked Mr. Gefell to describe the surroundings, and point out the location of some nearby housing on the map.

Mr. Gefell pointed these locations out. He also noted the location of a nearby Pepsi bottler and a propane distributor.

Mr. Katzman asked if the residents living on Superior Street would be impacted by the industrial park.

Mr. Gefell said that it would be unlikely. The houses are located down the street from the edge of the industrial park, and no traffic access was planned for Superior Street. The industrial park would be accessed only from outer Bradley Street.

Mr. Mix pointed out that the only neighboring uses are a cemetery and a non-conforming propane distributor. Thus, the sliver of Res A in question is surrounded by incompatible uses. Also, the Adopted Land Use Plan marked the area for industrial development 25 years ago.

Mrs. Freda said that the distance to the nearest residence is substantial; she does not see any likely negative impact.

Mrs. Gervera asked why this area was zoned Residence A in the first place.

Mr. Mix said that it was probably just a leftover area. In fact it may have been accidental—an unzoned white space on an old mylar map may have been interpreted as

Residence A. He also noted that the staff report recommends changing the propane distributor's property as well, as it faces the same circumstances as the applicant, plus it has an existing non-conforming use.

Mr. Katzman moved to recommend that City Council approve the request by Mark Purcell of Purcell Construction to change VL-R Bradley Street and 1108 Lewis Street, parcels 1-27-103 and 1-27-104, from Residence A to Light Industrial.

Mrs. Gervera seconded, all voted in favor.

Mr. Katzman then moved to recommend that City Council also change 1079 Bradley Street and 1069 Bradley Street, parcels 1-27-103.001 and 1-27-102, from Residence A to Light Industry.

Mrs. Gervera seconded, all voted in favor.

### **ZONE CHANGE – RESIDENCE B TO NEIGHBORHOOD BUSINESS 520-526 MEADE STREET – PARCELS 1-15-220 AND 1-15-221**

The Board then considered a request submitted by James and Laura Williams to change 520-526 Meade Street, parcels 1-15-220 and 1-15-221, from Residence B to Neighborhood Business District.

James Williams approached the board to explain his request. He stated that a martial arts studio was moving out of the Lincoln Building and looking for a new location. He felt that the former church in question would be a good location, and that he was interested in making an investment in the community.

Mr. Katzman asked if he would be the owner or the landlord for the martial arts studio.

Mr. Williams said he would be the landlord. He is in the process of purchasing the property, but the bank asked to have the zoning issue settled before closing.

Mr. Katzman noted that the board should consider other potential future uses, not just the martial arts studio.

Mrs. Freda and Mrs. Gervera discussed the other potential uses permitted in NBD, which include hotels and restaurants, and with a Special Use Permit: auto repair and gas stations.

Mr. Coburn said that he felt the site would be appropriate for other small retail.

Mrs. Freda asked if the land to the rear was vacant.

Mr. Williams said that it was.

Mrs. Freda and Mr. Williams discussed the current use of some nearby properties, which include multi-family housing, a costume store, a county office building, and an auto repair shop.

Mr. Mix noted that a Use Variance issued in 1978 allows the building to be used for storage. Also, the office across the street would not normally be allowed except that the County is exempt from zoning regulations. Thus, the potential development in the area is somewhat more intense than would normally be seen in a Residence B neighborhood.

Mr. Williams said that he had spoken to some of the neighbors and none of them voiced opposition.

Mrs. Freda asked why the adjacent vacant parcel had been included in the request.

The current owner of the building, Mr. Ketchum, said that it used to have a house on it, which was torn down by the City. The City then divided the parcel up and gave it to the neighbors. The vacant lot would be sold along with the building, and might be used in conjunction with it in the future.

Mrs. Gervera moved to recommend that City Council approve the request submitted by James and Laura Williams to change 520-526 Meade Street, parcels 1-15-220 and 1-15-221, from Residence B to Neighborhood Business District.

Mr. Coburn seconded, all voted in favor.

Mr. Katzman moved to adjourn.

Mrs. Gervera seconded, all voted in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 3:40 pm.